

UDOT to begin massive I-15 rebuild in Utah County

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UTAH COUNTY -- Utah County commuters will soon be dealing with 24 miles of freeway road construction, from Lehi Main Street to Spanish Fork Main Street.

Drivers can be sure to expect delays: the HOV lane will be gone during the next two and a half years, and there will be some overnight closures for drivers to deal with. A total of 55 overpass bridges will be rebuilt, as will 10 freeway interchanges.



The rebuild and expansion of the freeway is being called the [I-15 Core](#) project. Project spokeswoman Heather Barnum says crews will be working on the entire stretch of freeway basically at the same time.

"We have an aggressive schedule for this project to complete it in two and a half years, by December 2012," said Barnum. "Remember, Salt Lake County was four and a half years, and [in Utah County] we are doing 24 miles of freeway, so we really are going to get this done just as quickly as possible."

Construction will begin in the next week or two. At first, it will be limited to the shoulders for utility work.

The Utah Department of Transportation says the first six months will be the most painful for drivers. After that, the impact shouldn't be as severe.

"This is not going to be like the I-15 job where we had the 'I-15 luge'; that's not going to be the case here. We will have more lanes than just two in each direction, for the bulk of this project," Barnum said.

At a kickoff event Monday, Gov. Gary Herbert gave the go-ahead to 30 separate companies, all working together on the I-15 Core project.

The project is expected to employ around 2,000 people and pump millions of dollars into the local economy.

"It means \$1.7 billion in economic development that is going to create jobs; and it's not only the immediate jobs, but the most important thing is long-term," Herbert said. "We can't have economic prosperity if we don't have a decent infrastructure, and that starts with roads."

The I-15 Core project will add two additional lanes in each direction and extend the HOV lane from University Parkway all the way to Spanish Fork.

"It will be difficult, I think," said UDOT executive director John Njord. "The first five months of this project will be particularly difficult. We're going to be taking a lane in each direction, just to begin the widening process."

What may also make the construction difficult for drivers is a lack of alternate routes. State Street does not run directly north and south, but winds through several communities. Geneva Road is just a two-lane highway.

"We think if folks can alter their work hours, if at all possible, that will be helpful for them as well as for the workers on the job," Njord said.

UDOT says commuters can also look for ways to minimize delays by [carpooling](#).

UDOT is holding meetings to [help businesses prepare](#) for what's to come. The agency will also be using Facebook and Twitter, and sending out weekly e-mails during the course of the construction project to update drivers.

You can find more information about the project [HERE](#).

Utah County Corridor Expansion (CORE)



- Construction begins spring 2010; to be completed December 2012
- From the Lehi Main Street to Spanish Fork Main Street
- Expands I-15 by two lanes in both directions
- Extends express lane from University Parkway in Orem to Spanish Fork
- Rebuilds and reconfigures 10 freeway interchanges
- Replaces and restores 55 bridges

Story compiled with contributions from [Randall Jeppesen](#) and [Sam Penrod](#).